

Schweizer Grand Prix Kunst
Grand Prix suisse d'art
Gran Premio svizzero d'arte
Grand premi svizzer d'art
Swiss Grand Award for Art

Prix Meret Oppenheim 2025



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Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2025 for:

Felix Lehner (p.3)

Pamela Rosenkranz (p.4)

Miroslav Šik (p.5)

June 17-22, 2025, Messe Basel, Hall 1.1

Award Ceremony and Opening: June 16, 2025

The Federal Office of Culture (FOC) is awarding the Prix Meret Oppenheim to outstanding Swiss art practitioners for the 25th time since it was founded in 2001. At the recommendation of the Federal Art Commission (FAC), the prizes for the 2025 edition will go to Felix Lehner, Pamela Rosenkranz and Miroslav Šik. The FOC would like to warmly congratulate the prizewinners as well as the members of the jury. Together with the winners of the Swiss Art Awards, the prizewinners will be honoured on June 16, 2025 in Basel. Christine Binswanger, Simon Baier and Alberto Dell'Antonio will deliver the laudatory speeches at the award ceremony.

On the site of a former textile dyeing plant in the Sitter Valley on the outskirts of St. Gallen stands an international centre for art and production. It comprises the Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen, the Sitterwerk Foundation and the Kesselhaus Josephsohn. The remarkable feature of this place, with its unpretentious atmosphere, lies in the juxtaposition of traditional crafts and state-of-the-art technologies, artistic engagement and exceptional material knowledge. It offers a unique combination of concentration and stimulating exchange. This organism – a kind of contemporary and future-oriented builder’s hut – has grown up over the years and is in large part the work of Felix Lehner (b. 1960 in St. Gallen). It contains everything from a vibrant production operation to an art library, a material archive, workrooms for guest artists and presentation spaces. Today, some 100 specialists from a range of professions work closely together in the various fields with artists from around the world.

When Felix Lehner opened his own art foundry in Beinwil am See in 1983, he was 22 years old. The realisation that he wanted to cast works of art came to him while he was still at school. Because there was no training in that discipline available at the time, and he had absolutely no desire to go into industry, he initially opted for an apprenticeship as a bookseller. Thereafter, he learnt the art of casting and its theoretical principles largely on his own, save for a year and a half working as an assistant in an art foundry. The art foundry moved to St. Gallen in 1994, and today Felix Lehner presides over a company employing some 80 people as well as a subsidiary in Shanghai. The often unconventional production methods are developed by Felix Lehner and his dedicated team working closely in a kind of alliance with the commissioning artists.

An especially prominent member of this creative conglomerate is the sculptor Hans Josephsohn (1920–2012). He and Lehner became both collaborators and friends, based on the latter’s groundbreaking encounter with Josephsohn’s work while training as a bookseller in the 1970s. Indeed, the first bronze cast at Lehner’s foundry was a relief by Josephsohn. Opened in 2004, the Kesselhaus Josephsohn is an exhibition space, gallery and archive for Josephsohn’s estate, and operates in close synergy with the foundry. The same applies to the Sitterwerk Foundation, established in 2006 and comprising an art library, material archive and workroom building. These complementary and fertile cross-pollinations between book, material, dynamic order and active engagement with issues of sustainability are appreciated not only by artists, but also by researchers, museums and architects. A seemingly utopian concept has evolved into an important venue for culture and society.

“It’s not just about fulfilling a commission. It’s about giving the material relevance and magic.”

“I’ve learnt that you derive meaning and enjoyment from working and researching when you expend yourself, so that you get more energy back than you’ve invested. That also means being moved inwardly. What drives me is proximity to the artistic process: being involved in developing, doubting, deciding, being an ally.”

“A lot came about on the basis of dreams, ideas, wishes. I acted without assurances, sometimes without approval. Inner imagination can transform dreams into reality.”

Pamela Rosenkranz (b. 1979 in Altdorf) explores the materialities and biochemical processes that affect our behavior and perception. Through her work, she probes the intersections between nature and artificiality, challenging what it means to be human.

With her installation *Our Product* (2015) at the 56th Venice Biennale – where she represented Switzerland – she transformed the Swiss Pavilion into a multisensory experience. The space was filled with a pink, viscous liquid and infused with a custom-developed scent. Combined with audio and light works, she blurred the boundaries between body, identity and environment. The work examined how perception is shaped by both cultural and chemical influences, demonstrating Rosenkranz’s ability to captivate her audience both sensually and intellectually.

Rosenkranz uses materials that reflect the human body and its connection to the natural world. Her series *Firm Being* (since 2009) features PET water bottles filled with pink silicone, addressing themes of purity, identity and the commercialization of natural resources. *Alien Blue Windows* (since 2017) engages with a radiant RGB blue reminiscent of oceans and the religious symbolism of the sky. By manipulating such primary colors, she explores how biological evolution and cultural conditioning shape our aesthetic sensitivity.

In her *Viagra Paintings* (since 2014), she combines medical and artistic elements: aluminium panels in various flesh-toned shades reflect neurochemical processes associated with expressive creativity. Works such as *Infection* (2017) utilize synthetic pheromones to investigate invisible influences on behavior and perception. In *Healer* (2019), she developed a performance featuring a robotic snake, merging ancient symbolism with biomimetic technologies. These works, showcased at venues such as the Sharjah Biennial and the Okayama Art Summit, bring to the fore the blurring division between nature and technology in the Anthropocene.

Pamela Rosenkranz’s work represents a highly unique contribution to contemporary art, reflecting recent, radically transformative shifts in the philosophical and scientific understanding of humanity and nature.

Rosenkranz completed her MFA at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bern and held a residency at the prestigious Rijksakademie in Amsterdam from 2010 to 2012. With *Old Tree* – a bright red and pink sculpture – she created a signature public art installation on New York’s High Line, which was on display from 2023 to 2024. Her solo exhibition *House of Meme* (2021) at the Kunsthaus Bregenz explored the significance of memes as cultural codes on the internet. Her works are part of major collections, including the Centre Georges Pompidou and MoMA in New York. From May 2025, her work will be shown in a major solo show at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

“Beyond art historical interpretations, there are many other perspectives, such as the ones informed by biology and psychology. How do humans experience emotions? How do we express our feelings? And how do we affect one another? Art figures like a membrane – a medium through which we can explore these questions about human existence without simply reducing them to language.”

“I am interested in how the particular works on a micro level – whether it’s viruses or pigments penetrating the skin.”

At the ETH in Zurich in the 1980s, Miroslav Šik (b. 1953 in Prague) developed a consequential movement with the catchy yet combative label *Analogue Architecture* which was to influence Swiss architecture and some of its leading practitioners for years to come. It espoused a deliberate rejection of classical modernism, but was also a counter-movement to the intellectual and often ironic postmodern. It worked with influences from the immediate environment, local atmospheres and traditions. Its large-format, gloomy drawings of designs that are difficult to categorise and provocatively amodern in nature have etched themselves into the collective memory of Swiss architects. In pamphlet-like writings and in interviews, Miroslav Šik formulated the theoretical background to the movement and contributed to the extensive media coverage it attracted.

In the early 1990s, after his academic activities at the ETH ended, Šik moved into architectural practice. He created his first widely admired constructions and rebuilds, including the Catholic Centre in Egg (ZH), the La Longeraie congress centre in Morges (VD), and the musicians' residence in Zurich.

Following stints lecturing in Prague and at the EPFL in Lausanne, Šik was appointed full professor at the ETH in Zurich at the start of the 2000s. He taught a practically oriented and conciliatory architectural language that blended regionalism, traditionalism, and modernism and was dubbed old-new architecture. Over almost 20 years lecturing on the subject at the ETH, Šik influenced further generations of architects.

Alongside his teaching work, Šik put his ideas of an old-new reformist architecture into practice, designing numerous residential buildings, retirement homes, educational institutions and ecclesiastical constructions. Conversions and sensitive redesigns of interiors, many of them listed, also became important areas of his work. In 2012, Šik designed the Swiss Pavilion at the International Architecture Exhibition in Venice.

He has been a professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague since 2018, and continues to run the architecture firm Šik Partner, now together with Daniela Frei and Marc Mayor.

Šik's teachings and constructions have been extensively reviewed and published. Two monographs on his work have appeared – *Altneu* (Lucerne, 2000) and *Miroslav Šik. Architektur 1988–2012* (Lucerne, 2012) – along with a book on his teachings, *Analogue Altneue Architektur* (Lucerne, 2018).

Šik was honoured with the Heinrich Tessenow Medal in 2005. He received the State Award from the Czech Ministry of Culture in 2024.

“I understand tradition in terms of colour. Very concretely and never abstractly. And certainly not patriotically.”

“I think of the ensemble as an orchestra with many sounds that more or less fit together. But only more or less. Not harmoniously. Or like a preserved monument. Just more or less.”

“But the main thing is you approach the job with the intention of letting people participate, by taking account of their traditions and their places.”

PUBLICATION

The Federal Office of Culture is producing the publication Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2025 with portraits and interviews of the prizewinners. The interviews were conducted by Ursula Badrutt with Felix Lehner, Bice Curiger with Pamela Rosenkranz and Lukas Imhof with Miroslav Šik.

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- Graphic Design: Roman Aurelio Keller
- Photography: Théa Giglio
- Print run: 5,000

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SWISS GRAND AWARD FOR ART PRIX MERET OPPENHEIM

The Prix Meret Oppenheim was launched in 2001 by the Federal Office of Culture in collaboration with the Federal Art Commission. It honours artists, architects, art educators, researchers and critics who have succeeded in putting Swiss artistic production in the spotlight beyond national borders and for extended periods of time. Each award carries prize money of CHF 40,000.

FILM PORTRAITS

Director Jessie Fischer created film portraits of the winners of the Swiss Grand Award for Art / Prix Meret Oppenheim 2025.

- German, French with subtitles
- Duration: approx. 5 minutes each

The film portraits will be shown at the Swiss Art Awards exhibition and can also be viewed at www.swissartawards.ch as of June 16, 2025.

PRIX MERET

OPPENHEIM 2025 JURY FEDERAL ART COMMISSION

President

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- Una Szeemann, Artist, Zurich and Tegna

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- Mia Hägg, Architect, Habiter Autrement, Locarno (until 31.12.2024)
- Nemanja Zimonjić

Commission Secretariat

- Léa Fluck, Art Historian, Federal Office of Culture

LAUREATES 2001–2024

2024

- Jacqueline Burckhardt
- Marianne Burkhalter & Christian Sumi
- Valérie Favre

2023

- Stanislaus von Moos
- Uriel Orlow
- Parity Group

2022

- Caroline Bachmann
- Klodin Erb
- Jürg Conzett & Gianfranco Bronzini

2021

- Georges Descombes
- Esther Eppstein
- Vivian Suter

2020

- Marc Bauer
- Barbara Buser & Eric Honegger
- Koyo Kouoh

2019

- Meili Peter Architekten
- Shirana Shahbazi
- Samuel Schellenberg

2018

- Sylvie Fleury
- Thomas Hirschhorn
- Luigi Snozzi

2017

- Peter Märkli
- Daniela Keiser
- Philip Ursprung

2016

- Adelina von Fürstenberg
- Christian Philipp Müller
- Martin Steinmann

2015

- Christoph Büchel
- Olivier Mosset
- Urs Stahel
- Staufer/Hasler

2014

- Anton Bruhin
- Catherine Quéloz
- Pipilotti Rist
- pool Architekten

2013

- Thomas Huber
- Quintus Miller & Paola Maranta
- Marc-Olivier Wahler

2012

- Bice Curiger
- Niele Toroni
- Günther Vogt

2011

- John Armleder
- Patrick Devanthery & Inès Lamunière
- Silvia Gmür
- Ingeborg Lüscher
- Guido Nussbaum

2010

- Gion A. Caminada
- Yan Duyvendak
- Claudia & Julia Müller
- Annette Schindler
- Roman Signer

2009

- Ursula Biemann
- Roger Diener
- Christian Marclay
- Muda Mathis & Sus Zwick
- Ingrid Wildi Merino

2008

- edition fink (Georg Rutishauser)
- Mariann Grunder
- Manon
- Mario Pagliarani
- Arthur Rüegg

2007

- Véronique Bacchetta
- Kurt W. Forster
- Peter Roesch
- Anselm Stalder

2006

- Dario Gamboni
- Markus Raetz
- Catherine Schelbert
- Robert Suermondt
- Rolf Winnewisser
- Peter Zumthor

2005

- Miriam Cahn
- Alexander Fickert & Katharina Knapkiewicz
- Johannes Gachnang
- Gianni Motti
- Václav Požárek
- Michel Ritter

2004

- Christine Binswanger & Harry Guggler
- Roman Kurzmeier
- Peter Regli
- Hannes Rickli

2003

- Silvia Bächli
- Rudolf Blättler
- Hervé Graumann
- Harm Lux
- Claude Sandoz

2002

- Ian Anüll
- Hannes Brunner
- Marie José Burki
- Relax (Marie Antoinette Chiarenza, Daniel Croptier, Daniel Hauser)
- Renée Levi

2001

- Peter Kamm
- Ilona Rüegg
- George Steinmann

EVENTS

- Award Ceremony
Swiss Grand Award for Art /
Prix Meret Oppenheim and
Swiss Art Awards
June 16, 2025

- Exhibition
Swiss Art Awards 2025
June 17-22, 2025
Messe Basel, Hall 1.1
Free admission

Tue-Sat 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Sun 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information, see:
schweizerkulturpreise.ch

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photographs of the prize-
winners can be found at:
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